

Contributions

MY BIBLE

C. F. YODER.

Thou blessed book, sweet gift of love,
I turn thy pages o'er and o'er;
I love thy precepts more and more,
As in my life their worth I prove.

Life is a journey and thou art
A lamp unto my wandering feet,
My daily food and comfort sweet;
Thou art my guide and only chart.

I Pet. 2: 11; Ps. 119: 105; I Pet. 2: 2; Ps. 119: 150; Rom. 15: 4; Ps. 73: 24.

Life is a warfare, and in thee,
I find my sword, and shield and tower
Of refuge and the promised power
To win for aye the victory.

I Tim. 6: 12; Eph. 6: 17; Prov. 18: 10; Ps. 91: 4; Rev. 12: 11.

Life is a school, and thou blest book,
Dost teach me how to understand
Its varied lessons, and the Master's hand
Shines out more clear with every book.

II Cor. 5: 19; II Tim. 3: 16; Ps. 19: 7-11; John 5: 39; II Cor. 3: 18.

Life is a field of action. Thou
Dost teach me how to live most true,
And how to use my talents too
All for the kingdom, here and now.

John 9: 4; Ps. 119: 9; Matt. 25: 14-30; Matt. 6: 33.

But best of all thy pages shine
With light from Him who is my life
And love, and all my days are rife
With joy from that sweet life divine.

II Pet. 1: 19; John 1: 4; Gal. 2: 20; John 14: 27.

Blest Spirit, who inspired the word
Wilt thou illumine every page
Guide thou my youth and in mine age
Still lead me closer to my Lord.

II Pet. 1: 21; John 14: 26; Job 5: 19; Joel 2: 28; Jer. 3: 4; II Tim. 3: 15; Ps. 37: 25; II Tim. 4: 7.

GOVERNMENTAL EXPEDIENCY

Read at the National Conference of the Brethren church, Johnstown, Pa., 1897, by G. W. Rench.

Years and years ago there was a young Jewish peasant who lifted up his voice on the Judean hills and declared that he was the way, the truth and the life, and that no man could come to the Father but by Him. One of his followers when asked the question as to who He was said, "Thou art the Christ the Son of the living God." The young prophet immediately replied that his answer was to be the rock upon which His "new and living way" was to be established, and what was more, even the gates of the grave should not prove the declaration false. Jesus, God's dear Son, went fearlessly to the grave, ready to put his statements to the test, and He has ever been ready to have them tested since. The morning of the third day came and in the presence of the Roman soldiers He came forth from the grave, not only a prophet, but a Conquerer and a King. Well could He say a few days afterward, "All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth." With this authority recognized by God the Father and the holy angels, if not by man, He commissions His disciples

in these words: "Go ye therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." The apostles according to divine commandment start out, making disciples, baptizing the believers and organizing them into congregations. That they were faithful in carrying out the second part of the commission, that of "teaching them to observe all things," a perusal of the epistles will readily show.

The entire procedure of the apostles and evangelists of their day, in preaching the gospel and turning men and women from their errors to the truth and building up the first congregations was under the infallible guidance of the Holy Spirit; not a mere empty claim of the presence of the Holy Spirit as in modern times when the only manifestation is much sound and little sense, but the unmistakable manifestations which were clearly miraculous and overwhelming in proof that God was in the work, that the work was His. A prominent writer and preacher says, "The churches formed under the labors of the apostles were built up under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of God, according to the pattern shadowed by the ancient temple built by divine direction. These first congregations of the Lord, built up under the infallible guidance of the Spirit of God, and then confirmed by the most stupendous, grand and awful displays of supernatural power, are the divine models for all churches. They were creations from the hand of Divine Power, and intended to be, in the true sense, models for all churches in all times. Departure from them is departure from the Lord—it is apostasy."

The Divine Economy of Grace was right from the start. Being the work of the Lord it could not be otherwise. His work was simply right, perfect, complete. Nothing to be added and nothing to be taken away without bringing ruin on him who does it. Some one says, "I would like to have something more than mere assertion to establish what you have been saying." In reply I will state that quotations bearing upon the completeness of the gospel as well as its right to stand absolutely alone, untrammelled and unfettered by the devices of men, could be given almost without number. To save time and your patience I shall give but one. In II Peter 1: 3, we have these words: "Seeing that his divine power hath granted unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, thro the knowledge of him that called us by his own glory and virtue." The Holy Spirit here says that the "divine power hath granted unto us all

things that pertain unto life and godliness." Did the Spirit make a mistake when he used the word *all*? Should he have said the divine power hath granted us *most things* that pertain unto life and godliness? Many shape their theology as if he did say the latter. When God says *ALL* is it not more consistent for gospel-alone people to say *all* than to say *most*? The first churches being planted according to divine direction and authority, and the work having been approved by the bestowal of miraculous gifts and powers it is evident that the very best plans and methods of carrying on—I will not say church work in the modern sense in which it is often used—but the Lord's work, are to be found in them. These holy and inspired men did not try different plans to see how they would do, but the Lord knew just how they would work. Therefore if we want to be apostolic, if we want to be scriptural, if we want to be right, we should come not only to a model church but to the one having a divine model.

But I suppose it is the desire of the committee that I say something about "A Manual of Church Expediency" which appeared in the BRETHREN EVANGELIST some time since with the announcement that the delegates to this convention would be asked to act upon it. Just what is meant by *acting upon it* I can only anticipate. I suppose it means voting upon it to adopt it. Whether this convention adopts this Manual or whether it does not, I do not think I shall go crazy over the matter even if I should not have far to go. I stand upon the principles enunciated in reference to the first church being a divine model in every thing "pertaining to life and godliness," and the action of this body or any other can not induce me to step off the apostolic platform. So if you should come to Indiana ten years from now, the Lord sparing my life and giving me a little sense, you will find me preaching from the text "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." I might conclude to use occasionally I Cor. 15: 12, "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received and wherein ye stand; by which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain." There may be hay-seed in my hair and moss growing upon my back but my course is fixed and has been since the Lord found me and pardoned me.

So far as the Manual concerns us, I do not see how human wisdom and genius could give us a better one. It is concise, clear and pointed. It portrays the hand of an artist and the skill of a philosopher. I have great regards for the